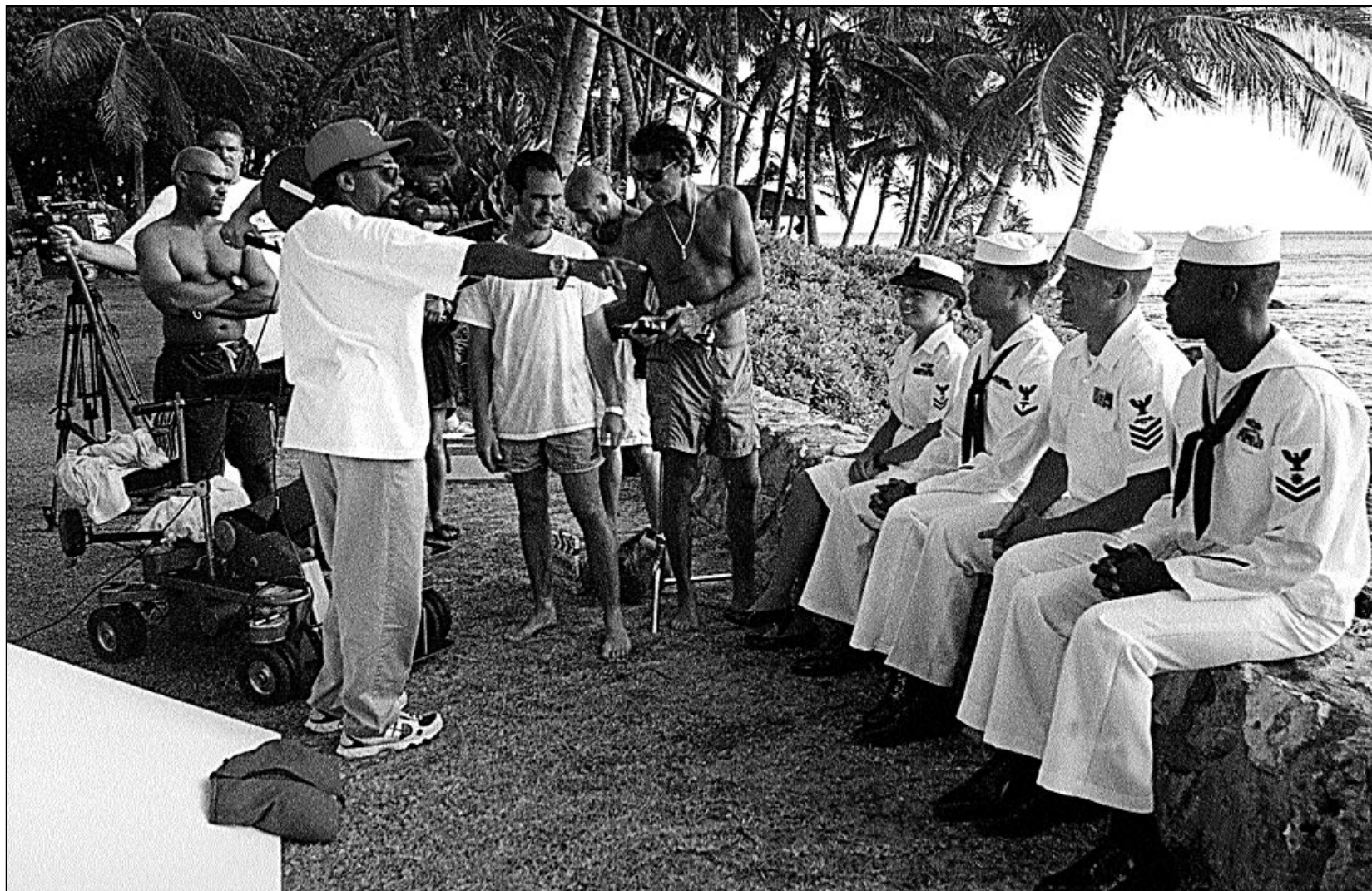


LIBERTY CALL

Spike wants you!



Filmmaker, actor, director and producer Spike Lee gives directions to DP2 Sherry White of Commander, Submarine Forces Pacific, HM3 Kirby Jahnke of Naval Medical Clinic, ABET1 Tim Suhr and QM2(SW) John Burch from the Navy Recruiting office in Honolulu on the final day of shooting the Navy's newest recruiting commercial. Lee and his film crew spent last week scouting locations around Oahu before two intense days of shooting.

□ ACTION!

Spike Lee films last of six Navy recruitment commercials in Hawaii

story and photos
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HNN ASSISTANT EDITOR

There's a buzz going on in the Navy community.

The fact that the Navy paid \$2.5 million for their new recruitment commercials isn't a big surprise. The fact that they hired Hollywood filmmaker and N.Y. Knicks fan, Spike Lee, to film and produce them may be.

A team of advertising executives from BBDO, New York and two of the Navy's best recruiting representatives joined Lee and his award-winning director of photography, Ellen Duras, on this project.

The high-octane team descended on Oahu and spent a hectic week in meetings, interviewing Sailors, scouting locations and preparing truckloads of people and equipment for two days of filming. Lee didn't grant any interviews, but couldn't pass up the chance to talk about his Knicks and take a jab at NBC-TV sports anchor, Bob Costas.

"The Knicks in six," Hollywood director, Spike Lee predicted in an impromptu interview with NBC affiliate, KHNH videographer Derek Hoffmann last Tuesday morning on Waikiki beach.

It was the only topic the filmmaker, actor, director and writer spoke about on-camera during his whirlwind-shooting schedule. Lee told Costas he wasn't court-side for game-one of the NBA championship (airing on NBC) - between Larry Johnson's N.Y. Knicks and former Naval officer, "the Admiral," David Robinson's San Antonio Spurs - because "... some people have to work."

And work he did.

Spike Lee, who began his feature film career with "She's Gotta Have It" in 1986,

has produced one hit film a year ever since.

Many wondered why the sometimes controversial, but very successful filmmaker would agree to do Navy recruitment commercials.

Butch Robinson, producer for Lee's 40 Acres and a Mule production company, said Lee's reason for doing the project was simple.

"Directors love challenges," Robinson said.

He went on to say that these commercials are different than those previously produced for the Navy.

He said that this sixth commercial installment, being filmed in Hawaii, highlights the opportunities the Navy affords its Sailors in travel and leisure.

The other spots focus on educational opportunities, teamwork, family pride and other alluring aspects of Navy life.

Some are still asking, "why the touch of Hollywood?"

With an overall booming U.S. economy and the relative ease for young men and women to get a job, recruiting efforts have been difficult for all military organizations.

That is one of the prime reasons the Navy commissioned Spike Lee's talents. The Navy is hoping that one of Hollywood's hottest directors can do for them what he has done with a string of his hit movies at the box office - attract eligible candidates to their local recruiting offices.

"We're competing with our sister ser-

vices, private industries, junior colleges and four-year colleges," said Lt. Cmdr. Karen Jeffries.

The Navy's representatives, Cmdr. Carol Christman and Jeffries, both from

with cool resolve.

They answered their ever-ringing cell phones, traveled to location after location, arranging flights for Sailors appearing in the commercials, all while juggling logistics, Sailors, media, and any number of things that could happen and did.

Through it all, Christman and Jeffries remained focused on getting the right Navy message out for these commercials: "the Navy offers its members many benefits including travel, education and experience in addition to the opportunity to serve your country."

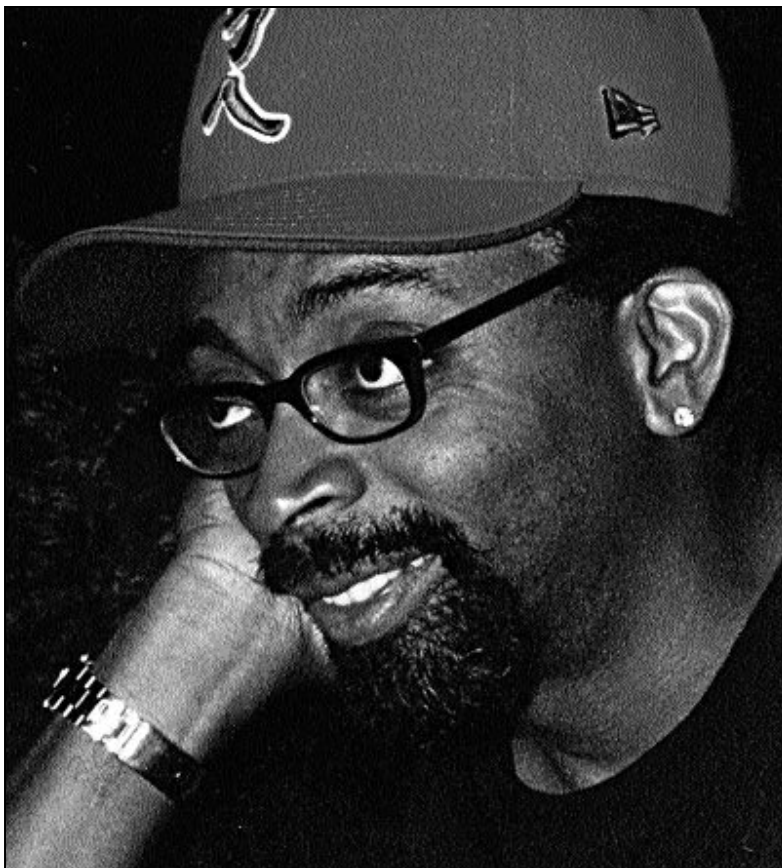
Many of the Sailors who saw the completed ads said they liked them because they showed a side of the Navy many don't see - a side that's contrary to the preconception that all Sailors do is work, work, work far away from their families.

They also said Lee's visual style and documentary approach to this series of commercials would help the Navy's recruiting efforts.

To add to the documentary style and impact of the commercials, Lee employed the services of real Sailors instead of actors to add more credibility to the spots.

"We're trying to make the point that the Navy provides an alternative for folks who are at a point in their lives where they need one," Robinson said.

The Navy is hoping that Lee's vision of what Navy life is like will help make potential candidates 'do the right thing' and sign up.



Spike Lee

Navy Recruiting Command, Arlington, Va., were blurs of motion their entire stay. The pair dashed to meetings with Commander, Navy Region Hawaii, Rear Adm. John W. Townes III, coordinated elements of the recruiting commercials with local and mainland commands, private companies and public affairs teams